Vol. III. Numb. 41.

THE OBSERVATOR.

Remarks on an Engagement betwixt a Swediſh *and an* Engliſh *Man of War On the News from* Portugal.

Note, That this Paper was Written on *Monday* laſt, before the Mail Arriv'd; the Author being threeſcore Miles from *London*.

From Wednesday Auguſt the 9th, to Saturday Auguſt the 12th, 1704.

Obſ. WELL, Honeſt *Country-man*, what News at *London*? Are the Mails Arrived?

Country-man. The News Writers are quite broken, they are forced to make Comments on their former News, to ſupply the Deficiency of the Mails. They have got one *Swediſh* Story, that they have told two or three times over, and which I have always forgot to tell you.

Obſ. A *Swediſh* Story, Prithee what is't?

Country-m. A *Swediſh* Man of War, being at Sea in the Channel, ſome of our Queens Frigots came up with her, and the *Swede* not Striking, as it is uſual in ſuch caſes, one of our Men of War Fired a Gun, as a Signal for him to Strike, which the *Swede* not heeding, our Man of War Fired a Ball, which the *Swede* anſwered with a Broadſide; ſo that a Fight enſu'd, and a power of Sailors were Kill'd on both ſides; but our Ships being too many for the *Swede*, he was brought in. Now, Maſter, we are not at War with the *Swede*, and why ſhould we Fight one another? Sure the *Proteſtant* Princes are not going to Act the part of my Lord *Thommond*'s Cocks.

Obſ. No, no, there's more in this Story than you take Notice of; you over-look what is moſt material and worthy Conſideration: The News-Papers ſays, That when the *Swede* was taken, the Commander ſaid, *That he had Acted according to his Inſtructions*, which were, *That he ſhould not Strike to any, not ſo much as to* England, *even in the Channel.* So that, it ſeems to me, this Ship was ſent Abroad on purpoſe to breed a Quarrel.

Country-m. What d'ye mean by Striking, Towelling, or ſo?

Obſ. Striking is a Term apply'd to the Soveraignty of the *Brittiſh Seas*; it is a ſort of Salutation, by Striking or Low'ring the Main Top-Sail on the Cap, and by Low'ring the Colours half way down the Staff: This was the Method of our Anceſtors, and this was always done to the Ships of War of *England*, whoſe Kings have held the Soveraignty of the *Narrow Seas* from *Edgar*, if not before; and the *Brittiſh Channel* has been always eſteem'd the Bed-Chamber of the Kings and Queens of *England*.

Country-m. And ſo then this *Swede* has Committed a *Rape* on Her Majeſties Soveraignty, in Her Majeſties Bed-Chamber: Well, and ſhan't we maul the *Swedes* for this Action?

Obſ. The Wiſdom of our *Admiralty*, which conſiſts of Gentlemen of large Capacities, ſo Famous for their Learning and Knowledge in the *Oeconomy* of the *Engliſh Navy*, and the *Laws Marine*; and who have given ſuch Eminent Proofs of their Courage on the Ocean, will, no doubt, procure Satisfaction to an Injur'd Nation in this Reſpect.

My Buſineſs is to make Obſervations, and to draw Concluſions from occurring Circumſtances, and not to determine Points: From this Action we muſt conclude that the *Swede* intends a Breach with *England*, and that conſequently he is in Alliance with the *Common Enemy*. The *French* ever ſince the Fatal Blow, given them at *la Hogue*, by Admiral *Ruſſel*, have never been able to Repair the Shatter'd Condition of their Navy; and its *Naval Power*, ever ſince that time, has been employ'd more in Privateering, which the *Exchange* of *London* knows full well, than in making a Naval Figure on the Sea; ſo that the Condition of their *Maritime Strength* ſeems to call for Auxiliary Helps, and they have ſomething to do by an Alliance, which they can effect of themſelves.

It ſeems wonderful, at this time a day, that the Naval Power of *England* ſhould be Inſulted at this rate, and that the Empire of the Sea, which is as much the Queens Right as is Her Crown, ſhould be thus Invaded. 'Twould be an Invidious Subject to make an Enquiry into our Naval Miſcarriages, that might encourage Aſſaults of this Nature: We have had too many Stains in our Sea-Enſigns, ſuch as have been viſible enough to our Neighbours; the Return of the *Tholoun* Squadron, the Affair of *Pointi*, the late Inglorious Action of *Graydon*, the Treachery at *Camaret*, with many other like Inſtances may encourage our Neighbours to think us either Supinely Careleſs or Cowardly, ſince the Actors in thoſe Diſhonourable Scenes have been ſo ſlightly Puniſhed.

The *French*, with the ſmall Remains of a Navy, have done Wonders; they have kept up their Trade and Reputation in both the *Indies*, and at the ſame time have made Succeſsful Enterprizes in *Europe*; they have made the *Venetians* truckle in the *Adriatick Gulph*, and have Raviſh'd their Miſtreſs from their very Arms; they have ſeen the *Engliſh* Fleet this Summer in the *Mediterranean*, and have got from them without a ſcracht Face into *Tholoun*. That Squadron of the Count *de Tholouſe* had never put to Sea, had it not been provided with Victuals by ſome Ill Men in *England*, who, I find, have greater Intereſt than could be wiſh'd. Now, if we are ſo falſe to our ſelves, as to Victual our Enemies Ships from home, and to let 'em paſs the Ocean abroad without a Bruſh, our Enemies may be encouraged, and Petty Kingdoms may make Pretenſions to the Empire of the Sea.

'Tis in vain for a Private Perſon to Attempt a Redreſs of *National Abuſes*, we can only tell our Fellow Natives how our Wheel of Fortune moves, and, under the views we have of approaching Ruin, can ſit down and Lament the Condition of our Dear Country: When our chief Strength, our Navy, is impair'd, what other Hopes have we of Defence? In caſe of an Invaſion, we can then only ſay, *To thy Tents*, O England! And how can we depend on a Militia

that

that has not been exerciſed for eight or ten Years in moſt parts of the Kingdom?

Country-m. I proteſt, Maſter, I wonder at our Lieutenancy; for my part, I have forgot to Poize my Musket; and yet, if the *French* or *Perkin*, or any Body comes here, I'll Shoot 'em if I can. But do you think the Parliament will not take theſe things into Conſideration?

Obſ. Our Noble Patriots, the Peers, began with the Navy the laſt Seſſions, and repreſented to Her Majeſty the Corrupt Management of the Victualling: I hope the Noble Body of Peers do think that the People of *England* took that good Action of theirs only as an Earneſt of their future Services to their Country, and that they do expect from them a finiſhing Stroke to what they have ſo happily begun.

Country-m. Maſter *Obſervator*, what do you ſay to your King of *Sweden* now, that you have ſo often Vindicated?

Obſ. 'Tis the part of an Honeſt Man to judge of things as they appear to Publick View. The King of *Sweden* had a good Cauſe, he was abus'd after a Treacherous manner, and God has Crowned the Juſtice of his Cauſe with Succeſs, which many times makes Princes forget the Hand that Sav'd them, and to think that their Succeſſes are long of themſelves, and are chiefly owing to their own Courage and Conduct.

The King of *Sweden* had the leaſt reaſon of any Crown'd Head, to offer this Indignity to Her *Britannick* Majeſty, who was ſo much his good Friend (when the *Pole*, the *Muſcovite*, and the *Dane*, were upon him at one time) as to ſend a Squadron of Her Ships to bring *Denmark* to Reaſon, and by that means eas'd *Sweden* of an Enemy that ſtuck ſo faſt in the Skirts of his Country, and has now offer'd Her Mediation for a Peace in the *North*. This Affront may give the King of *Sweden* occaſion of Repentence, if this Action be his own, and not his Commanders. ——Haſt any more News?

Country-m. We have two Mails from *Lisbon*, which confirm the Report of the Duke *d'Anjou*'s March with his Forces into Quarters of Refreſhment, 150 Miles up the *Spaniſh* Country, and has left the *Spaniards* to Guard their Frontiers next *Portugal*.

Obſ. This gives our Generals an opportunity of Invading *Spain*, if their Forces are in a Condition for Enterprize. It alſo looks as if there was no good Underſtanding betwixt the *French* Forces and the *Spaniards*, and that the *French Perkin* takes not ſo much care of his new Kingdom, as at firſt he ſeem'd to do: He grows Squeamiſh, and learns a new ſort of Philoſophy, that tho' a part is not greater, it may be better than the whole, and that he had better have accepted of the Partage, allowed him by the Partition Treaty, than to have ventur'd at all. And the Right of that Treaty, and that of the Will need not diſturb his Conſcience, they are ſo much a like juſt.

Country-m. Here's one thing in this Account that vexes me, the *Engliſh* Garriſon in *Portalegre* is to March to *England* thro' *France* and *Spain*, which will be a great hardſhip on the poor Creatures this hot Weather.

Obſ. It's a long March, and we muſt expect many of them muſt fall by the way. This is old piece of *French* Policy: Our Men are to made a Show of in thoſe parts, and they'll ſwade the *French*, that theſe are all the Men Confederates had ſent to the Aſſiſtance of new King, and that they have taken every of them. Thus they did in the beginning of late War, when Captain *St. Loe*, after a Fight was taken with his Ship, and carried *France*. They March'd the Captain and Crew thro' the Country to *Marſeilles*, and thence to *Dinant*, and expos'd 'em all the to the *French* Slaves as the major part of *Engliſh* Sailors; and I dare engage they'll ſay ſame by theſe few Land Forces, and that poor Creatures will believe it as firmly as believe in the Virgin *Mary*.

Country-m. It is believed, on all Hands, the *Spaniards* will now Revolt, and 'tis reported that the *Admirante* of *Caſtile* is Marching to favour an Inſurrection.

Obſ. I think now is the only time if our Forces be but in a condition to enter *Spain*, tho' know the Seaſon of the Year will render it difficult in that Country. Is there not one Word of News from *Flanders*?

Country-m. Not a Tittle; yet the *Jacks* and *High-Flyers* are full of News; they are Happy Fellows, when their Stock of News is ſpent, they can ſit down and make more, and if Lying be a Sin, there's their Leaſing making Parſon *Leſly*, can at any time Abſolve them. I wonder the Queens Meſſengers do not ſit in the *Jacobits* Coffee-Houſes and hear what they ſay, I have known the time when they ſat to hear Honeſt Men ſpeak Truth, and then took 'em into Cuſtody for ſo ſaying.

Obſ. Let 'em Lye on, 'tis their Talent; we ſhan't be long without News, and Pray look to get the firſt.

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